



Arlington Poet Laureate Committee

Minutes December 10, 2015

Present: Liza Halley, John Burt, Jane Howard, Pamela Powell, Jeff Boudreau, Joe Curro
7:45 AM 2nd Floor Conference Room, Town Hall Annex

1. **Future of the Committee** Conversation with Joe Curro about the future of the committee. Committee originally convened as a lightweight program merely to make the selection of the laureate. Should the committee wear a second hat as a laureate's advisory committee? He has spoken with the Board of Selectmen. They could appoint us as an advisory committee if we wanted to. About soliciting funds: a gift account could be created through the comptroller's office to support the programming of the poet laureate. The by-law was written to make the position honorary, but it did not preclude the laureate for receiving stipends for activities. This seems the most straightforward route. It's harder to put up a warrant article, since anything can happen in Town Meeting. The program has been incredibly successful. People have been lining up to see Miriam. We have the flexibility to renew Miriam for up to a three-year term. (We make recommendations and the selectmen make the selection.) Question: if we set up a gift account, who will be responsible for that? This would come through the Comptroller. Question: Do we have to go to Town Meeting to set up a gift fund? No, the Comptroller can do this. (This is OK with the Town Counsel). Perhaps this should go through the Library? They can set up an account. Question: five bodies had to sign on to the process established by the warrant to appoint us. The committee does not have terms defined by its warrant. Doesn't this mean that we have no standing to do any ongoing work? Did our work end when we appointed Miriam? Did it say we would come back to life at the time of appointing a new laureate or renewing the laureate? Are we life appointees then? It's not specified in the warrant. (This isn't a concern for Joe. But do we want to go to the Town Meeting to give us formal terms of office?) Adding advisory board to our title would give us the ability to raise money for programming. Do we need to formally appoint officers with terms (a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary?). Question: When is the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen for us to come to to make the case for this redefinition? We should come to the January 11, 2016 meeting. Should we make a report to the Town Meeting in May if we become an advisory committee?
2. **Approval of Minutes of September 1** The minutes were amended and approved.
3. **Outstanding items from Previous Minutes** We support the existence of an advisory committee, though it isn't necessary that that committee be us individually. The Town Counsel has written to Joe Curro about this: "... The members of the committee which

recommended her [Miriam Levine] to us have also remained active and an important resource for her. Accordingly, I would like us to support their dedication and the Poet Laureate by giving them a broader charge than simply recommending the next Poet Laureate to us. There, I move as follows:

(1) First, establish a Poet Laureate Advisory Committee as a committee of the Selectmen, charged with:

- Serving as a liaison between the Selectmen and our appointed Poet Laureate;
- Requesting and recommending works, readings, and other artistic contributions to the Poet Laureate and the Board of the Selectmen; and
- Advising the Selectmen on the disbursement of honoraria or other similar funds for programming and activities of the Poet Laureate through available Town gift funds; and

(2) Second, appoint the members of the screening committee for the Poet Laureate, as organized by the vote of the 2014 Town Meeting and Town Bylaws Title II Article 11 to serve as the Poet Laureate Advisory Committee, for a term consistent with Article 11."

3. **Board of Selectmen Meeting** We request to Marie Krepelka to be on the agenda of the January 11 meeting of the Board of Selectmen.
4. **New Business:** We should feature all the things Miriam is already doing when we meet with the Board of Selectmen. We will meet on Thursday January 7 at 8am to dicuss what to say.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45